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LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ

Summary

-- The lead story in all papers (with the exception of Al-Arab Al-Yawm) today, March 9 focused on the signing of the temporary Iraqi constitution. Other lead stories focused on domestic-related issues including the cabinet meeting that held in the port city of Aqaba.

Editorial Commentary

-- "No constitutions for military bases!"

Daily columnist Khaled Mahadin writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (03/09): "Since March 20, 2003, Iraq became the target of the American war machine, and since April 9, 2003, it has become an American base, and American bases are ruled by neither temporary nor permanent constitutions, but by the American Pentagon. The important thing is for the Iraqis to remain steadfast and loyal to uncompromising pan-Arabism and non-surrendering Iraqi nationalism. They must not allow any opportunity for those lurking from within and from without to harm Iraq and they must persevere until that time when occupation is defeated and the invaders are kicked out of the homeland."

-- "After endorsing the temporary constitution"

Daily columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (03/09): "Whatever the opinion about the temporary Iraqi constitution is, we breathed out with reassurance once the members of the governing council signed the constitution, because otherwise the gates of hell will open wide and engulf the Iraqis.. There are forces inside Iraq, not to mention outside forces, that have no interest in seeing this agreement work out. The outside forces can be dealt with if Iraqi factions that are carrying arms now are convinced to switch to peaceful political struggle. But this means that the governing council, particularly the Shiites and the Kurds, must backtrack from labeling others with the mortal sin of collaborating with the former regime. The former regime was there for 30 years and it is logical that thousands of people would be working in that regime's military and security apparatuses. The decision to remove these people from their positions or pursue them would be equal to making them fuel for the military resistance.. The next correct step after the endorsement of the temporary constitution is to backtrack from any discriminatory measures and give the necessary reassurances to all citizens, including those who served the former regime."

-- "The temporary Iraqi constitution is a step on the way"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (03/09) editorializes: "Under the difficult circumstances that Iraq is going through, the governing council's signing of the temporary constitution is a particularly important event. Given domestic factors, the differences over some of constitution's items, and the nature of representation in the governing council, yesterday's signing signals an important step forward, even if some consider it incomplete or inadequate.. The task at hand will not be easy. Iraq is a country confronted with an absence of security and stability, and on its ground there are forces at work that refuse to accept the new reality. This is in addition to the challenge that everyone will have to live up to in terms of enforcing what was achieved in the constitution and strengthening

national agreement.. Iraq is entitled to get support from its Arab brethren at this stage in order to back up its march and help it build its official and popular institutions."

HALE